

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-13, 15-19 and 21-23 remain in the application, of which claims 1, 13 and 17 are independent. Claims 1, 3, 13, 15 and 17 have been amended. Claims 2, 14 and 20 have been cancelled.

Claims 2-4, 6-9, 14, 15 and 20 are objected to but deemed otherwise allowable if amended to include their respective base claims and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 5, 10-13, 16-19 and 21-23 stand rejected either under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) or 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

By this amendment, for the purpose of expediting prosecution, and without conceding the correctness of the rejections, applicants have amended independent claims 1, 13 and 17 to include subject matter from claims deemed allowable.

Accordingly, applicants submit that amended independent claims 1, 13 and 17, and claims 3-12, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 21-23, which each ultimately depend from one of claims 1, 13 and 17, are in condition for allowance, and withdrawal of the rejections to the claims is requested.

Thus, applicants submit that each of the claims of the present application are patentable over each of the references of record, either taken alone, or in any proposed hypothetical combination. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections to the claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the above remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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